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The Security Council,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Region,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of all States in the region and *emphasizing* the need to respect fully the principles of non-interference, good-neighbourliness and regional cooperation,

Recalling that the Governments of the region bear the primary responsibility to protect civilians within their territories and subject to their jurisdiction, including protection from crimes against humanity and war crimes,

Expressing concern over the significant increase in the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Great Lakes region over the past year, totalling now more than 7 million internally displaced persons and 3.5 million refugees, and *stressing* the link between forced displacement and instability and insecurity in the region,

Reiterating its deep concern regarding the security and humanitarian crisis in the DRC exacerbated by destabilizing activities of foreign and domestic armed groups, *stressing* the importance of neutralizing armed groups in the DRC, and *recognizing* the importance of efforts of the Forces Armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), including by conducting joint operations, in accordance with its mandate as stipulated in resolution 2348 (2017),

Welcoming the credible and peaceful conduct of elections in some States of the Great Lakes region, and *noting*, however, that recent and ongoing electoral processes in some countries of the Great Lakes region raise deep concerns about the risk of instability, insecurity, the potential for violence, human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and further displacement of people which impact all countries of the Great Lakes region,

Expressing concern at the illicit flow of weapons within and into the DRC, including their recirculation to and between armed groups, in violation of resolution 2360 (2017), and *declaring* its determination to continue to monitor closely the implementation of the arms embargo and other measures set out by its resolutions concerning the DRC, and *acknowledging* in this respect the important contribution the Council-mandated arms embargo makes to countering the illicit transfer of small

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arms and light weapons in the DRC, and in supporting post-conflict peacebuilding, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and security sector reform,

Expressing further concern at the illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources by armed groups among others, and the negative impact of armed conflict on protected natural areas, which undermines lasting peace and development for the DRC, and *encouraging* the Government of the DRC to strengthen efforts to safeguard those areas,

Recalling the linkage between the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources, including poaching and illegal trafficking of wildlife, and the proliferation and trafficking of arms as one of the major factors fuelling and exacerbating conflicts in the Great Lakes region, and *encouraging* the continuation of the regional efforts of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the governments involved against the illegal exploitation of natural resources, and *stressing*, in this regard, the importance of regional cooperation and deepening economic integration with special consideration for the exploitation of natural resources,

Reaffirming that the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework remains an essential mechanism to achieve durable peace and stability in the DRC and the Region, *noting and supporting* the renewed commitment of its signatories towards its full implementation, and *reiterating* its call to all signatories to fulfil promptly, fully and in good faith their respective commitments under this Framework in order to address the root causes of conflict and put an end to recurring cycles of violence, and promote lasting regional development,

Recalling the strategic importance of the implementation of the PSC Framework, and *welcoming* the commitment of the AU Peace and Security Council, as expressed in its communique of 7 November 2017, to ensure the implementation of the PSC Framework, and *echoing its call* upon all the signatory states and the Guarantors of the Framework to redouble their efforts, in order to ensure effective implementation of all aspects of the Framework,

Recalling the commitments under the PSC Framework by all States of the region not to interfere in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries, and to neither tolerate nor provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups, and *reiterating* its strong condemnation of any and all internal or external support to armed groups active in the region, including through financial, logistical or military support, and not to harbour war criminals,

Stressing that the 2006 Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the PSC Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region are mutually reinforcing, and are crucial tools to achieve long term peace and prosperity, *emphasizing* that the PSC Framework demonstrates that peace, security and development are interlinked and underscores the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, including the deepening of economic integration,

Mindful that solutions to the prevailing situation in the Great Lakes region should come within a regional perspective, by addressing the root causes of conflicts including their developmental aspects, many of which are regional in nature; with cross-border issues linked to the eastern DRC assuming crucial significance, including the large flows of natural resources, migrants and refugees, and activities of armed groups and criminal networks across the borders,

1. *Welcomes* the renewed commitment of all the signatory states of the PSC Framework towards its full implementation, as expressed in the Communique of the

Eighth High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, on 19 October 2017, *reaffirms* that the PSC Framework remains an essential mechanism to achieve durable peace and stability in the DRC and the Region, and *stresses* in this regard the importance of the signatory States fully implementing their national and regional commitments under the PSC Framework;

2. *Welcomes also* the progress under the Regional Plan of action for the Implementation of the Regional Commitments under the PSC Framework, including the recent activities in the areas of youth and women, combating illegal exploitation of natural resources and judicial cooperation, as well as the endorsement of the updated list of Priority Activities of the Regional Plan of Action;

3. *Encourages* enhanced cooperation among all signatory states of the PSC Framework, with the support of its Guarantors, namely the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the United Nations, towards its full implementation;

4. *Strongly condemns* all armed groups operating in the region and their violations of international humanitarian law, as well as other applicable international law, and abuses of human rights, including attacks on the civilian population, MONUSCO peacekeepers and humanitarian actors, summary executions, sexual and gender-based violence and large scale recruitment and use of children, and *reiterates* that those responsible should be held accountable;

5. *Demands* that all armed groups operating in the DRC, including the FDLR, the ADF, the LRA, cease immediately all forms of violence and other destabilizing activities, including the exploitation of natural resources, and that their members immediately and permanently disband, lay down their arms, and liberate and demobilize all children from their ranks, recalls in this regard its resolution 2360 (2017) renewing the sanctions regime, and *further calls for* disarmament of FDLR active leadership and combatants, who were perpetrators of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, during which Hutu and others who opposed the genocide were also killed, and have continued to promote and commit ethnically-based and other killings in Rwanda and the DRC;

6. *Reiterates* its call to all signatory States under the PSC Framework to redouble their efforts in order to fully and promptly implement their commitments in good faith, including not interfering in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries, neither tolerating nor providing assistance or support of any kind to armed groups, and not harbouring war criminals, and *calls on* the Government of the DRC, which has the primary responsibility for safeguarding the DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to make further progress in implementing its commitments under the PSC Framework, in particular as regards security sector reform, consolidation of State authority, reconciliation, tolerance and democratization;

7. *Calls on* the Government of the DRC, with the support of the countries of the region in line with their commitment under the PSC Framework, and in close collaboration with MONUSCO, including by conducting joint operations in accordance with its mandate as stipulated in resolution 2348 (2017), to vigorously pursue the neutralization of all armed groups still active in the Eastern DRC, and *stresses* the need to protect the civilian population, including through professional, accountable and sustainable security forces, and to carry out operations in strict compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable;

8. *Welcomes* the commitment of the signatory states of the PSC Framework to complete without precondition the repatriation of the FDLR disarmed combatants and former M23 combatants within the shortest time frame possible, *urges* the Governments of the region, with the support of the PSC Guarantors, to strengthen their collaboration to meet the agreed timeframe;

9. *Requests* the Governments of the DRC, Uganda and Rwanda to strengthen their collaboration to ensure the repatriation of former M23 combatants located in their territories consistent with the Nairobi declarations and in line with commitments under the PSC Framework, *calls upon* the Guarantors of PSC framework to continue their engagement with the stakeholders towards the resumption of the joint consultation between the DRC Government and the former M23 leadership initiated in 2016 under the auspices of the Guarantors, and *further urges* the former M23 leadership to cooperate fully with the repatriation of former combatants consistent with its commitment under the Nairobi declaration;

10. *Reiterates* its call for a suitable solution for the relocation of elements of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in Opposition (SPLM/A-iO) currently present in the DRC, *welcomes* the spirit of collaboration displayed by the Governments of DRC and South Sudan and the progress achieved thus far in this regard with the support of MONUSCO and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and *calls on* all regional actors and the international community to support these efforts;

11. *Commends* the efforts of the African Union, as well as the subregional organizations in particular ECCAS, EAC, ICGLR and SADC, towards supporting political processes and finding peaceful solutions for the conflict situations in the region;

12. *Urges* continued regional and international support for initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive dialogue amongst national stakeholders and *stresses* the importance of opening political space to enable the full and free participation of peaceful political parties, civil society and the media as well as the full participation of both men and women in the political process, *urges* international and regional support for strengthening and improving capacity for elections and governance in the countries of the region, and *calls on* member states in the Great Lakes region to take steps to ensure that electoral processes promote peace and security through timely, peaceful, inclusive and credible elections, in line with countries' own constitutions and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as applicable;

13. *Notes* the link between justice and conflict prevention, and *calls upon* all countries in the Great Lakes region to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and *encourages* them to actively pursue accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and to effectively support measures of conflict prevention by ending the culture of impunity, and *welcomes* efforts by national governments to reverse such trend;

14. *Shares* the view expressed in the RSF GLR that there is an urgent need to address violence and discrimination against women and girls, including rape and other forms of sexual violence in the Great Lakes region and take into account the link between women's participation in peace and security decision-making, for peace and gender equality;

15. *Supports* the regional initiatives on the issue of gender related violence in armed conflict to influence regional and local decision makers, aimed at the

implementation of the commitments of the Kampala Declaration addressing impunity for gender based crimes at the country level and to improve women's visibility, empowerment and resilience;

16. *Welcomes* measures taken by the Governments in the region to implement the Group of Experts established by resolution 1533 (2004) due diligence guidelines, including adopting the Regional Certification Mechanism of the ICGLR into their national legislation, in accordance with OECD Guidance and international practice, and *further welcomes* the successful organization of the Regional Experts and Stakeholders Consultation on Natural Resources and Good Governance for Sustainable Peace, Development and Transformation of the Great Lakes Region, held in Nairobi on 5 and 6 July 2017, and *notes with encouragement* the increased cooperation between ICGLR and other partners on strengthening the ICGLR Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources;

17. *Stresses* the need to undertake further efforts to cut off financing for armed groups involved in destabilizing activities through the illicit trade of natural resources, including gold or wildlife products, and *encourages* the continuation of efforts by the Governments of the region to address issues of illegal exploitation and smuggling of natural resources, including holding accountable all those who participate in the illicit trade of natural resources, particularly gold and wildlife products, and *further encourages* enhanced cooperation among the Governments in the region in line with its resolution 2360 (2017);

18. *Stresses* the need to find durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers in the region, the majority of whom are women and children and are especially affected, and *welcomes* the efforts of Governments in the region and of regional and subregional organizations, as well as the hospitality provided by host communities for the millions of displaced people, and *recalls in this regard* obligations of the States in the region under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;

19. *Urges* the governments of the region, as well as regional and international partners, to continue addressing urgent and drastically increasing humanitarian needs and pursue durable solutions for internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers, *notes* that despite increasing needs, humanitarian appeals remain underfunded across the region, and *urges* international partners, and the donor community at large, to step up their support to humanitarian action in the region and in the DRC;

20. *Underlines* the importance of peacebuilding efforts to address the root causes of conflict through a collaborative approach between the countries in the region and the African Union and African subregional organizations, as well as international partners, and *recognizes*, in this regard, the potential contribution of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), in accordance with its mandate as stipulated in resolutions 1645 (2005) and 2282 (2016);

21. *Recalls* the Regional Strategic Framework for the Great lakes region 2016–2017 (RSF GLR), which outlines the United Nations development approach in support of the implementation of the PSC Framework; and *urges* the donor community to contribute to the implementation of the RSF GLR, as an effective platform for partnership, in support of member states in the national and regional commitments aimed to address the root causes of conflicts, promote economic development and cooperation among countries of the region, as well as strengthening mechanisms and capacities to address cross-border insecurity and trafficking, and bring about durable peace in the Great Lakes region;

22. *Calls on* the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region to continue his regional and international engagement in furtherance of peace and stability in the DRC and the region, including through the promotion of timely, credible, and inclusive national elections, regional dialogue and by continuing, in close coordination with the SRSG for the DRC and Head of MONUSCO, to lead, coordinate and assess the implementation of the national and regional commitments under the PSC Framework, as well as to continue his engagement in regional initiatives with key partners to address the underlying root causes of conflict, while avoiding overlapping with other United Nations institutions;

23. *Stresses* the need for deepening cooperation among the Guarantors of the PSC Framework, namely, the UN, AU, the ICGLR and SADC with the core signatory countries of the Framework, to ensure that major regional political and security challenges are addressed in a spirit of cooperation, and to create conditions for sustainable peace, stability and development in the DRC and the Great Lakes region, and for future alignment of the United Nations presence and engagement to this end;

24. *Invites*, in this regard, the Secretary General, to engage in high-level dialogue, in collaboration with the African Union, with the signatory states and Guarantor institutions of the PSC Framework, as well as key regional and international partners, to assess the progress, challenges and shortcomings in the implementation of the Framework, and to present his vision, supported by concrete recommendations, to the Council in his next report, which would mark the fifth anniversary of the signing of the PSC Framework.